

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-16 are amended for form. No new matter has been added.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 2, 6-8, and 13-16 contain allowable subject matter. However, for at least the reasons discussed herein, all claims 1-16 are allowable.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-5, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Applicants' admitted prior art (PAT) in pages 1-4 of the filed specification in view of Rey (U.S. Patent No. 6,110,535). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Rey does not disclose or render obvious the manufacturing method of a ceramic structure including at least the step of firing the formed body after prefiring when the formed body after prefiring is placed on a layer formed by a refractory firing powder containing silicon metal, as recited in claim 1.

In particular, the Office Action, page 2, admits that PAT does not disclose a method of siliconization of the pre-fired ceramic. However, the Office Action asserts that Rey cures the deficiency of PAT. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that Rey discloses a siliconization method for a ceramic substrate by placing a substrate on a honeycomb structure filled with the silicon metal powder (see Figs. 1 and 2, elements 12a, 12b, 12, and 10 of Rey).

Rey teaches a porous substrate 10 placed on an intermediate layer, which is an Si-based composition in powder form 12b filling a honeycomb structure 12a. The Si-based composition in powder form 12b migrates towards a substrate situated beneath and also towards a substrate situated above as the Si-based composition reaches its melting point (see col. 9, lines 11-20 of Rey).

As observed, in Rey, the Si-based composition is only added to the substrate after firing but not before firing. Thus, Rey does not disclose firing the formed body after prefiring when the formed body after prefiring is placed on a layer formed by a refractory firing powder containing silicon metal. Thus, Rey fails to cure the deficiency of PAT. Therefore, PAT and Rey, either alone or in combinations, fail to disclose or render obvious the features recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, claim 1 defines patentable subject matter. Claims 3-5 and 9-12 depend from claim 1, and are therefore also allowable by virtue of their dependence from claim 1, as well as for additional features they recite. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Objection

The Office Action objects to claims 2, 6-8, and 13-16 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim 1. The objection is traversed.

Claim 1 is allowable for the above-discussed reason. Accordingly, the grounds for the objection is obviated. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection of claims 2, 6-8, and 13-16 is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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